LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

After Margate

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

British Guiana —Our Case

JANET JAGAN

November, 1953

One shilling and sixpence

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RANK-AND-FILE PEN PICTURE

HOW deep is the chasm between the reality of what people are feeling and doing and the appearance which propaganda organs and leaders foist on the world as the face and voice of Britain. Take, for example, the picture presented of the British Labour movement at the T.U.C. and the Labour Party conference. To quote a Labour Party reader from Lancashire: 'It is virtually impossible to assess the real mood of Margate from our reactionary press. The conclusions reached and the voting figures should convey an authentic record; but do they? Facts compel one to state—NO!' And he goes on to analyse what is concealed by the machinery of 'the mighty and devastating block vote.' How different, he explains, would be the picture if some vote-casters had to use three voting cards representing members in favour, against, and abstaining on every question; and remarks: 'It's a fantastic suggestion, however, for it would necessitate consultation between the right-wing union leadership and their members—an out-dated practice.' Now, *Labour Monthly* does 'consult with members': and if it were not for the tyranny of space limits, what a convincing picture we could give readers in some 60 countries overseas of the true mood and voice of the people of Britain—*in their own words*. Here's a glimpse, if only a phrase or two, from letters received from Labour Party members alone, on the Margate conference and the official policy *Challenge to Britain* endorsed there:

The constituency parties showed that they desired a socialist policy—given a chance the trade unions will follow. Dictatorial constitutions must be smashed out of trade unionism. . . .

Margate's Tory trade unionists with Labour tags! The capitalist always uses politics just as he will always persuade you not to. . . .

A great pity more inside our ranks don't advocate the points you make. . . .

It's a Conservative programme. . . .

It put British Socialism back 50 years. . . .

An instrument of capitalism, not socialism. . . .

Nauseating! Socialism doesn't mean sacrifices for the working people. . . .

After what I've said, you must be wondering why I don't join a real Socialist Party. . . .

Feeble evasion of fundamental socialist principles. . . .

Let's get back to the original L.P. policy of international brotherhood. . . .

Let's hope greater unity in the whole movement will soon prevail. . . .

Who's in charge of policy, us or the cold war? . . .

The movement must weld together all progressive forces to fight Tory reaction at home and international capitalism abroad. . . .

A move away from Socialist first principles by political adventurers. . . .

We need a real Socialist foreign policy that would be a challenge to the whole capitalist world. . . .

Hinder rather than help at the next election. . . .

Unless we seize the initiative in foreign affairs with a genuine peace policy, Labour need not bother to fight any more elections. . . .

I cannot resist quoting in detail from a young Lancashire Catholic councillor: 'The whole idea of Radical Toryism or Liberalism should be eradicated as a disease from our ranks and replaced by a healthy Socialist outlook.

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Notes of the Month

Guiana and Margate

The profound hypocrisy and ingrained barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked.

MARX, 'Future Results of British Rule in India,' New York Tribune, August 8, 1853.

LIKE a lightning flash the armed coup of British Toryism against democracy in Guiana has illuminated all the questions debated at Margate equally by the Labour Party Conference and by the Conservative Party Conference. It is for this, then, that the supreme efforts of the British workers must be directed to piling up the guns and the tanks and the planes and the battleships and the weapons of destruction—proclaimed to be the indispensable priority at both Conferences in the sacred name of 'defence'—in order that the warships and troopships may speed across thousands of miles of ocean to invade the countries of other peoples. It is for this that the youth of Britain must be conscripted for two years—in order to be made the instruments of aggression against unarmed peoples, overthrow democratically elected Ministers and replace them by open dictatorship. It is for this that the working people of Britain, men, women and children, must go short, accept 'inevitable sacrifices' and 'postpone improvement of their living standards' (in the words of the Labour Programme 'Challenge to Britain')—in order

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to hold down by force impoverished colonial workers striving to improve their miserable conditions and win elementary democratic and trade union rights. The truth of imperialism cuts through the fine phrases of the platform at either conference.

Shades of Rousseau

In a memorable passage Rousseau castigated the servile philosophers who made themselves the apologists of the existing class society and sought to cover up its violence and oppression behind eloquent phrases about social responsiblity and the ethics of citizenship. In imagination he transported them to a battlefield, complete with all the then most modern means of destruction (how puny then compared with those of today!); he pictured the scene of carnage, the dead and the dying, and the groans of the wounded; and he exclaimed: 'Barbarian philosophers, behold the fruits of your teachings!' The ghost of Rousseau should have been present at both the conferences at Margate in order to conjure up to the imagination of the assembled delegates and burn into their consciousness the terror and devastation in Kenya, the concentration camps of half a million in Malaya, or the armed coup in Guiana. Well might he have proclaimed to the complacent figures on the platform of either conference: 'Barbarian preachers of the glories of your vaunted "Western civilisation", behold the fruits of your preaching in action!'

Lest We Forget

Nor would this have been some irrelevant rhetorical interlude to interrupt the serious business of the conference. These problems are no far-away problems for the British people, although neither conference had much time for them. The Conservative Conference was content to brandish a menacing fist over Suez, and to roar its rapturous applause to the bellicose declaration of Lyttelton proclaiming on behalf of a Government returned by a minority of the electorate that electoral majorities meant nothing to him, glorifying the sacred doctrine of Might is Right, and announcing the new Law of the Tabernacle that henceforth electoral majorities will receive short shrift if they dare to attempt any course of action disapproved by himself and his fellow exploiters of the empire. The delegates of the Labour Party Conference permitted the score of colonial resolutions, which revealed the deep concern of the socialist rank and file, to be relegated to the end of the agenda and finally dis-

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missed in five minutes on the last day, with the majority of these resolutions streamrollered out of existence. And yet these questions of Britain and the colonial peoples are at the heart of all the domestic problems of Britain, with which both conferences sought in vain to grapple. They are at the heart of the problems of the rearmament programme, of the cold war, and of the worsening conditions in Britain. They must be faced, if the British people are to solve their problems. They must be faced, if socialism is to conquer in Britain.

Thirty-six Years

Thirty-six years have passed since the victory of the first socialist revolution. The anniversary follows hard on the heels of the Margate Labour Party Conference which sounded the inspiring tocsin of the retreat from socialism (it was perhaps with unconscious irony that Low's cartoon, depicting the retreat of the dejected marshals, Attlee and Morrison, around the slouched figure of the Napoleonic Bevan, with the tattered banners 'Nationalisation Postponed Indefinitely' and 'Non-Planning', was in fact depicting, though he forebore from giving the title, the Retreat from Moscow). This anniversary reminds us that other working-class movements, under different leadership, under Communist leadership, have long ago achieved socialism, have got rid of their capitalists and landlords, and have taken the land and productive resources of their country into their own hands. Not only that. On this basis of socialism they have been able to increase their production fourteenfold (note well, all you wise 'practical' preachers of 'increased production' on the basis of intensifying capitalist exploitation). They have been able to raise their country from the lowest backwardness to the forefront of the countries of the world. They have been able to raise their living standards, and their social and cultural facilities, in a way and at a pace that has never before been remotely approached, let alone paralleled in any previous record of development.

Life in a Museum

We are indeed falling behind. There no man or woman under forty years of age can any longer remember a capitalist or a landlord; they read about them in books, in history textbooks or economic geographies of the capitalist world. Here we still live under the shadow of the landlord and the capitalist. Dutifully we

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bow our heads and pay them tribute every minute of our lives. We pay them tribute for every inch of land of our own country on which to live or to place the mortal remains of our dead; we pay tribute on every hour of our working lives; we pay tribute on every article that we buy. Once leaders, we have indeed fallen behind. We are living, as it were, still in the nineteenth century, in the Victorian age of the stage-coach and the horse-drawn tram, of the private capitalist and landlord (however inflated to monstrous monopoly proportions). There they are speeding forward in the twentieth century, forward from socialism to communism.

Paradox of Margate

And herein arises the peculiar Paradox of Margate. All the material conditions for socialism have been ripe and over-ripe in this country for three quarters of a century. The longer the necessary social change is delayed, the deeper grows the crisis of capitalism. The deeper the crisis of capitalism, the heavier the burdens and the costs which fall upon the people. It is as with a patient who allows a morbid growth to extend and to infect his whole body, for fear of the operation which medical science knows to be necessary. And it is precisely at this point that the very severity of the crisis of capitalism is presented as the supreme argument, not for the urgency of the changeover to socialism, but *against* any immediate changeover to socialism. That such an argument should be presented by the capitalists and their spokesmen is understandable. But today this argument is presented by the leadership of the labour movement, which was built up by the pioneers in order to end capitalism and replace it by socialism, and whose leaders now proclaim, at the moment when all the prophecies of the pioneers are coming true, that the desperate economic situation to which capitalism has reduced the country is so serious as to make it essential in the name of 'economic realism' to forego any rash precipitate changes in the direction of socialism and to concentrate every effort on patching up the existing economic system. *The very bankruptcy of capitalism is made the supreme argument against socialism.* This is the Paradox of Margate.

Socialism and Survival

'The issue before the Conference', proclaimed the right-wing Labour M.P., Woodburn, in opposing the resolutions of the engineering and other unions and of the rank and file for extending nationalisation, 'is not whether we would like to live under national-

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isation, but whether the country will be able to live at all.' The argument has a familiar ring. This was the principal line of argument of Sir Oswald Mosley over twenty years ago, in the conditions of the world economic crisis, when he broke with the labour movement to found his new organisation and proclaimed that the issue was 'not socialism, but survival'. We know where that path led him. The assumption underlying this now fashionable line of argument of the new pontiffs of 'economic realism' is remarkable. Socialism is counterposed to survival. The poison of capitalism, we are informed, has reduced the patient to so pitiable a condition that his life is in danger. Conclusion? Give him some more of the poison. Previously the old socialist pioneers indicted capitalism for its incapacity to organise the modern forces of production within the fetters of existing property relations. But the 'new thinkers' and revisers of obsolete socialist doctrines now in charge at Transport House, fresh and brash from sucking up the academic pap spoonfed into them at the London School of Economics, are all agog to indict socialism for its inefficiency, and to proclaim the new Morrisonian gospel that in the name of 'efficiency' capitalism must be preserved.

Clarion Calls Against Nationalisation

'I speak for a large aircraft firm', announced one egregious specimen of this tribe of indoctrinated young puppies, and had to correct himself to make clear that he spoke for a constituency which contained a large aircraft firm. He continued:

> Am I to rebuke the aircraft industry by saying: 'Only two world records in three weeks. Nationalise it.'

The implication is clear. Capitalist industry means first-class efficiency. Nationalisation would mean chaos and ruin. Therefore, most worthy members of the Labour Party, stand firm against nationalisation and do not be carried away by the specious promises of plausible cheapjack socialist propaganda. Similarly Mr. Arthur Deakin, resolutely defending the capitalist engineering industry against the menace of nationalisation:

> This (engineering) industry has done a fine job of work and faced its responsibility to fill the export market.

Similarly the ex-Minister of Supply, George Strauss, no less resolutely defending the aircraft industry against the menace of nationalisation:

> Centralisation might break up the brilliant design teams which have given Britain the lead in the air.

Down with nationalisation!

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Who said 'Economic League'?

At the Trades Union Congress at Douglas the General Council's 'Report on Public Ownership' (mercilessly exposing the dangers of public ownership) was described by one delegate as 'the Tory Speaker's Handbook for the next election'. This record was worthily continued by the platform at Margate. Capitalism is efficient, or at the most may sometimes need a little jogging and co-ordination. Any extended nationalisation of capitalist industry would mean disruption, inefficiency, bureaucratic strangulation, falling production, loss of export markets, ruin. The workers are incapable of running industry. We have not the men. We have not the knowledge. The parliamentary machine is incapable of carrying through any widespread nationalisation within five years. Our economic existence depends on the capitalists. In short: Workers, Unite to save capitalist industry from the horrors of nationalisation. Such has become the modern gospel of the right-wing leaders which was dinned into the astonished ears of the working-class and socialist delegates at Margate. This was not a Conference of the Economic League. It was the Labour Party Conference at Margate.

'Sound Tory Doctrine'

But still, the hopeful delegate may plead, the aim of socialism as an ultimate aim has not been abandoned. It has only been postponed, while we all pull together and make 'inevitable sacrifices' for the economic survival of capitalist Britain. The grand aim of socialism remains enshrined in the hearts of our leaders. Did not James Griffiths stir us with his eloquence? Did not the Chairman's Address of Arthur Greenwood contain a wonderful passage on our ideal of socialism? Yes, indeed. The B.B.C., deprived of the opportunity of televising the Conference by the veto of the party managers who not unnaturally feared the effect on the untutored millions of seeing the contrast between the mood of the delegates and the remorseless operation of the block voting machine, devised the expedient of inviting a Labour M.P., Mr. Strachey, and a Tory M.P., an insurance broker, Mr. Leather, to talk over the day's proceedings of the conference each evening in a convivial atmosphere of 'all pals together' bonhomie. On the first evening, Mr. Strachey, stung by the repeated insinuation of his opponent that the Labour platform at the conference and the Tory Party really stood for essentially the same things against the horde of well-meaning feather-brained uninstructed delegates, insisted on the fundamental

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point of difference that the Labour Party stood for socialism, and proudly referred to the memorable words of the Chairman fearlessly proclaiming the Labour Party ideal of socialism. Unfortunately in his enthusiasm Mr. Strachey at this point put on the record to repeat the very words of this unforgettable definition of the Labour Party ideal of socialism, and the inspiring accents of Arthur Greenwood boomed upon the air:

> Our socialism is a moral rather than a material faith. . . . Our idea of socialism is not one of a society in which everything is done for people. It must be a society where the community has responsibilities to the individual, and where the individual has responsibilities to his fellows. The true essence of socialism is fellowship and service.

'Very sound Tory doctrine', commented the clipped Canadian accents of the Tory M.P., and the unhappy Mr. Strachey remained hopelessly punctured.

Two Conferences

There were two conferences at Margate—but it might almost be said that there was only one official line on all the decisive key questions affecting the fate of Britain. So far as the composition of the two conferences was concerned, the representative character, the spirit of the delegates or the intensity of the debates, there could be no comparison. The conference of the representatives of property, of the business men and rentiers and their hangers on, where a worker was displayed as a rare prize specimen, contrasted completely with the conference of representatives of the organisations of the working class, (even though filleted by the exclusion of the militant vanguard which had led the left at the Trades Union Congress and secured a consistent left vote around three millions as against the two millions or under at Margate, despite the addition of most of the local parties). But when it came to the policy of the platform on all the decisive questions—the American military alliance, the atomic bombing bases in Britain, the cold war, the wars in Kenya and Malaya, the trade bans, the rearmament programme, the imposition of sacrifices on the workers at home—the parallelism was appalling, despite differences of emphasis. In the one case the policy might be accepted with automatic somnolence. In the other case the policy had to be rammed down by the peculiar voting devices against the obvious feeling of the mass of the rank and file delegates. But the result was the same. Complacently *The Times* remarked on October 8:

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> The truth is that, in spite of the many differences in form and function, the rôles of the two party conferences are not so very different. They only appear more different than they are, because the Conservative Party does not seek to maintain the illusion that its conference is a democratic body exercising direct control over the party's leaders.

The 'illusion' of democracy in the Labour Party! A somewhat bitter compliment from the enemy. Unfortunately, if we contrast the character of the 867 resolutions and amendments submitted by the membership with the actual decisions (not to mention the rail-roading of the foreign policy statement without opportunity of amendment), the verdict is not without grounds.

'Compromise' Make-Believe

To console the rank and file the myth is sedulously fostered in certain quarters that the result of Margate can be regarded as a 'compromise' between the left and the right, on the basis of which 'unity' can now be declared to have been successfully achieved. Thus Mr. Crossman in the *Sunday Pictorial* of October 4:

> The real importance of the Margate Conference was that it formally and solemnly ended the open warfare inside the Labour leadership. The two documents approved by the Conference become not merely authoritative statements of party policy, but the terms of peace between Bevanites and anti-Bevanites. . . .
>
> This compact between the Right and Left wings of the leadership had of course been signed, sealed and delivered long before the delegates arrived at Margate.

There were, Mr. Crossman admits, 'a few trade union leaders and ardent delegates' who continued the fight after Mr. Bevan and Mr. Crossman had left the field. But 'the great mass of the Conference brushed aside these irreconcilables'. A few? A solid unbreakable left vote of one and a half to two millions on every division, even within the limits of a far from representative voting system. No, Mr. Crossman, the left has not abandoned the fight, even though a group in the upper leadership, in the name of a supposed 'compromise', have allowed themselves to become in practice the defenders of a right-wing policy.

Mr. Bevan and the Left

The role of the Bevan group has been, and continues to be, a very important reflection, within the ranks of the upper leadership, of the increasing pressure of the development of left opinion within the Labour Party and the trade unions. But the Bevan group has never been the leadership of the left, as the fight has actually

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developed below, even within the constituency labour parties, and still more within the trade unions and on the industrial battlefield. This was sufficiently shown at Margate, as it had already been shown at the Trades Union Congress. In the elections to the Executive the constituency party membership could only show their antagonism to the right wing by voting with heavily increased majorities for the Bevan group. But when it came to policy, the division was apparent. The programme 'Challenge to Britain', with its acceptance of the American military alliance, cold war and re-armament programme, and demand for 'inevitable sacrifices' and 'postponement of improvement of living standards' by the workers at home, aroused the widest anger and indignation from the rank and file, as the resolutions and amendments revealed. The Bevan group adopted the line of defending the main policy, while recommending amendment on details. *Tribune,* under the title 'Good! But it can be a whole lot better', recommended eight points for amendment. The result showed that, out of the over 300 amendments sent in, only 27 corresponded to the eight points of *Tribune.* The main body of the amendments, as of the resolutions, reflected the fight of the militant left against the central policy of the programme, alike in foreign and domestic affairs—the line of fight voiced on a national scale by the *Daily Worker* and the Communist Party. In the conference proceedings all the main issues were given to the right-wing spokesmen of the Executive to handle, while Mr. Bevan, silent on the main issues, was given the topics of health and housing, to defend the Executive and resist the demands for health centres or for the nationalisation of the building industry. This measure of differentiation on the left is not an expression of the retreat or collapse of the left. On the contrary, it is a reflection of the advance of the left, and of the strengthened political consciousness and fighting determination of the main body of the left in the trade unions and the labour parties.

Changing Political Climate

There is no doubt that there are very important positive results from Margate, alongside the negative and reactionary character of the main policy. That Mr. Attlee's speech and the foreign policy statement reaffirmed support for negotiations of the powers along the lines of the May Churchill-Attlee declaration was a very important positive result. So was the unanimous resolution condemning the alliance with Franco. So was the measure of criticism officially expressed against United States policy. All these are

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valuable levers, alike in the British political situation, and in the international political situation, and should be used to the utmost. They are the reflection of Britain's changing political position and orientation in the world. They would have been as unthinkable a few years ago, at the time of the Marshall Plan, when fulsome praise of the United States as the universal saviour and philanthropist was the main stock in trade of the Labour Party leadership, and criticism of the United States was a Communist heresy, as would have been Churchill's May declaration at the time of his Fulton speech. This beginning of change, however limited, is welcome; and the left can certainly claim to have played a part in bringing it about. But to jump from this to the conclusion that the left fight is over, the battle is won, the disastrous right-wing policy is liquidated, and the ranks can now go home to await in blissful anticipation the next election—this is a travesty of the real serious situation, and unforgivable self-deception to ignore the menacing consequences of the right-wing victory at Margate.

Who Won at Margate?

Certainly the capitalist press—usually quick and sensitive enough to shriek aloud at the remotest sign of menace to the sacred institutions it represents from any decision or action of a working-class organisation—has shown no doubt whatever who won at Margate, and has not been slow to announce its satisfaction. 'Sensible second thoughts on nationalisation', purred *The Times,* while emphasising that this retreat from nationalisation must be 'only a beginning' along the 'fruitful' (to the capitalists) path of recognising 'harsh economic realities'. The liberal cartoonist Vicky might mourn over the tombstone 'Here lies the spirit of socialism' or depict the ghost of Keir Hardie dismissed by Lawther, Phillips and Co. as 'an idealistic unrealistic dreamer'. The conservative *Sunday Times* found that 'at Margate, in regard to policy and programme the Right wing prevailed'. The *Economist* reported that, in contrast to the left swing at Morecambe, 'the counter-attack by the right wing has succeeded. . . . The Right wing of the Labour Party has won a famous victory'. The underlying note of anxiety in the comment of the capitalist press was expressed, not over the decisions of Margate, but over the visible strength of the left demonstrated in the size of the opposition vote and its firm basis in the combination of powerful progressive unions with the majority of the constituency labour parties.

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'Independence'—In Chains

There is no room for illusions over the menacing character of the decisions of Margate. These decisions confirmed the suicidal policy of the crushing rearmament programme, the trade bans, the cold war, the American military occupation of Britain, the wars on the colonial peoples, and the consequent crippling burdens on the standards and conditions of the British people. It is true that, in deference to the change in political climate, the same basic policy of tying Britain to the American chariot is now presented, no longer in terms of effusive eulogies of American world leadership, but in terms of a loudly proclaimed grim struggle for the economic 'independence' of Britain from the domination of the dollar. It is a measure of the strength of popular feeling that the policy of practical subservience to all the obligations and commitments of the Atlantic Alliance of American imperialism has now to be presented in professedly 'anti-American' terms, and dressed up in phrases proclaiming the aim of 'national independence'. But the talk of 'independence', while maintaining the essential conditions of dependence, is a deception. The demand for economic independence from dollar domination—*without* breaking the American-imposed trade bans which prevent the development of trade with the non-dollar world, *without* freeing Britain's economy from the ruinous rearmament programme imposed by American military policy, *without* challenging the actual American political and military domination—this becomes inevitably a programme, not for real national independence, but only for the most heavily intensified capitalist offensive against the British workers and the colonial working people in order to strengthen the competitive power of British imperialism against American imperialism, while maintaining the alliance. This is in fact the present policy of the British imperialists; and it is this policy which is faithfully echoed in the right-wing Labour programme 'Challenge to Britain'.

Who are the Economic Realists?

Similarly with the claim of 'economic realism'. It is not economic realism to imagine that Britain can simultaneously carry the heaviest arms burden of any major country in the world in proportion to population, maintain two years' conscription when no other major country of the Atlantic Alliance will accept it, cripple its trade with bans which prevent development of non-dollar sources and markets and artificially maintain the dollar deficit, squander resources in

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overseas military expenditure and wars, and at the same time pile up gigantic surpluses for capital export and for home capital investment. This is not economic realism. It is the economics of bedlam. The right-wing leaders at Douglas and at Margate might try to repeat parrot-fashion the statistics fed to them from the Foreign Office propaganda department to 'prove' simultaneously that East-West trade can only be 'negligible', and that the most gigantic apparatus requires to be maintained all over the world to defeat the menace of such 'negligible' trade developing. Unfortunately for these sedulous parrots in their blinkered ignorance of the economic facts of life, at the very same moment as the Margate Conference the British Ambassador to the United States was proclaiming the 'indisputable fact' that

> the great fall in east-west trade since before the war is one of the main reasons for Europe's increased dependence on North America for supplies, and hence for the dollar shortage. . . . The less you trade with the eastern bloc, the more you intensify the already serious unbalance in the economy of the western world, and the more you aggravate the dollar shortage, the more you intensify competition within the western group.
>
> (Sir Roger Makins, British Ambassador to the U.S., speech at Los Angeles, October 5, 1953).

The true economic realists today are the left, who alone present a positive and constructive policy to reduce the burdens which are strangling Britain, to expand Britain's trade, and to free the resources and man-power of Britain for productive development and to raise the standards of the people.

Trade Unions and the Labour Party

The three million engineering trade unionists who are pressing their demand for an increase in wages are fighting in the forefront for the real needs of the British people, just as their principal unions fought in the forefront with their votes at Margate for a progressive policy. The most positive and the most hopeful outcome of Margate is the alliance which has now been demonstrated and consolidated of the most progressive unions and of the majority of the constituency labour parties in the fight against the disastrous policies which are strangling the labour movement and the future of Britain, and for a progressive programme which can alone lead the way forward. This is the portent which has aroused alarm equally in the eyes of the capitalists and of the right-wing leaders. Hence the mutterings of the Deakins and the Douglases about possible secession from the Labour Party:

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> Don't drive us into the position of pulling out and breaking with the party (Arthur Deakin).
>
> Unless this stops there will be a split between the two wings of the movement (Harry Douglas).

It is not a question of a battle between the trade unions and the constituency labour parties, as the capitalist press eagerly hastened to report, and as the Tory party machine greedily hopes—or, indeed, as the ill-considered ejaculations of this handful of right-wing leaders, imagining themselves in their inflated self-importance to be the trade unions, might have appeared to suggest. On the contrary, the greater part of the consistent opposition vote of one and a half to two millions was a trade union vote. What was revealed in these dark threats of the extreme right-wing leaders was the fear that the visibly advancing strength of the progressive workers in the unions and in the constituency labour parties might swing the Labour Party to the left, that the block vote might begin to operate against them, and that the machinery of control in their hands might no longer prove automatically effective. It was in the face of such a perspective that they threw out their threats of future disruption by the right wing rather than accept the verdict of the majority.

Dilemma of the Right Wing

But here arises the dilemma of the right-wing leadership. As soon as the indiscreet folly of Mr. O'Brien attempted to translate these vague threats into precise terms, and to formulate in his interview to the *Manchester Guardian* a plan for a Labour Party based only on the constituency labour parties, that is, directly reflecting the rank and file, without any block votes, the same right-wing leaders drew back in horror from the Frankenstein's monster they had conjured up; Mr. O'Brien was duly castigated; and Mr. Deakin swore the eternal fidelity of the unions to the Labour Party. In the words of Mr. Churchill in his speech at Margate the following week:

> I have often said that the trade unions should keep clear of both parties and devote themselves solely to industrial matters. At present I must admit that they are doing useful work where they are in restraining the feather-heads, crackpots, vote-catchers and office-seekers from putting the folly they talk into action.

In this contradictory statement is revealed the dilemma of capitalism and the right wing in relation to the advance of the working class. On the one hand, the unions must stay in the Labour Party in order to provide, not only the financial basis, but the indispensable block vote machinery which has hitherto been used to defeat the rank and

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file ('the unions must stay within the labour movement in order to control the politicians', *Economist*, October 10). On the other hand, the votes at Margate reveal the possibility that a further continuance of the progressive advance within the unions, in alliance with the revolt of the constituency labour parties, might begin to turn the very machinery which has hitherto been the basis of right-wing domination into the opposite direction to end that domination; and in the face of that prospect the right-wing leadership hold out their dark threats of disruption.

Signals for United Advance

The moral for the working-class movement and for all socialists is clear. The dilemma of the right wing reflects the hope of the left. The alliance of the progressive unions and the constituency labour parties to rally the entire labour movement against Toryism and for a militant programme—this is the mighty engine of advance for the next stage of the Labour Party. In this battle we shall stand inflexibly for the unity of the working-class movement against all attempts at disruption. So far from encouraging the intrigues of a handful of right-wing trade union leaders in the direction of disruption, we shall strive to overcome and reverse the measure of disruption which the right wing has already carried out, in relation to the trades councils, and in relation to the democratic rights of trade unionists within the Labour Party. Our aim envisages the alliance and unity of all sections of the working class—communists, trade unionists, Labour party members and co-operators—in a common army to rally the entire nation and win the battle for peace and for socialism. This co-operation is already developing, in spite of all bans and attempts at disruption, and must continue to develop. What has been achieved at Douglas, with the three million votes for progressive policies, or at Margate, with the two million votes, is a measure of this co-operation. What has still to be achieved to overcome the reactionary character of the main decisions and official policy demonstrates the need for strengthening this co-operation and carrying further forward this fight for the future. This battle does not wait for the date of a future election. The Tory Government's offensive is already in full operation, equally in Guiana, Kenya and Malaya and against the conditions of the people, on wages, on prices, and on rents, at home. The battle is on now.

October 19, 1953. **R.P.D.**

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BRITISH GUIANA—OUR CASE

JANET JAGAN

BRITISH troops have occupied Guiana. The Constitution has been suspended. Elected Ministers have been dismissed. The Legislature has been prorogued. Meetings are banned. Police are raiding scores of homes. The Governor is virtual dictator.

What brought about this crisis? Officialdom alleges a Communist plot to create disorder and overthrow government, but no evidence is produced.

Strangely enough our Party has done little else in its brief four-month period in ministerial office than attempt to implement its election manifesto of April, 1953, which stated:

> We intend to amend all existing laws and regulations which restrict the civil liberties of the people such as banning of individuals, books and films.
>
> We shall introduce laws making it a crime to discriminate against any person or persons on account of race or religion.
>
> We shall guarantee freedom of press, worship, speech, assembly and association as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Other items in the programme were:

> Laws to protect the trade unions, including repeal of the Trade Disputes (Essential Services) Ordinance and a measure based on the U.S. Labour Relations Act; land reform, land settlement, security of tenure for farmers and provisions for agricultural loans; better control of the expenditure of the Public Works Department and enquiry into its administration; equal educational opportunities for all, with nursery schools and secondary education scholarships; low rental housing schemes; reorganisation of medical services; social insurance measures; reform of local government; Workmen's Compensation to cover industrial diseases; increase of direct taxes and reduction of indirect taxes; establishment of subsidiary industries; speedier implementation of the Factories Ordinance; and centrally planned drainage and irrigation.

We passed a Bill in the House to repeal a fascist law prohibiting importation and distribution of progressive literature. We opened doors to everyone by lifting certain bans. We passed legislation

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forcing employers to recognise for collective bargaining trade unions with majority support.* We increased loans to farmers. We passed an amendment to the security of tenure for rice farmers ordinance in order to help farmers during drought. We campaigned to remove church control of schools. We tightened up on public works expenditure, reducing votes in the bloated estimates. We curtailed unnecessary house building for senior government officials. We began a revision of fees of government doctors in order to help the poor. We were initiating legislation to reform local government by introducing adult suffrage and abolishing the system of nominated persons. We advocated jobs for local men in the police force and in other categories. We refused to send delegates to meet the Queen in Jamaica.

We increased the royalty on the proposed hydroelectric station. We were preparing an increase of royalties and of taxation of natural mineral resources. We refused to grant leases of crown lands to landlords already possessing large holdings.

We sent a delegate to Surinam to secure rights for Guianese fishermen in Dutch Guiana waters. We increased the number of scholarships known as People's Scholarships. We refused payment to the members of the State Council. We introduced legislation to suspend the Essential Services Act with reference to the right to strike; and for control of money lenders. We established committees to investigate the domestic workers' problem, the revision of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance and for machine stations for farmers. We appointed ordinary people to Government boards and committees.

We kept in close contact with our people and visited the countryside regularly, informing them of our activities and pointing out the constitutional checks. As these Constitutional brakes became more evident we exposed them one by one. At the same time as we occupied ourselves almost fully with local problems, we never lost sight of international problems: we pledged solidarity with the struggles of other colonial peoples, and with the movement to end

*The Sugar Producers' Association had refused to recognise the Guiana Industrial Workers' Union, which had the full confidence of the workers as evinced in the three-and-a-half weeks complete shut-down of the sugar industry that began on August 30. Yet the Sugar Producers' Association continued to recognise the Man-Power Citizens' Association, a company union which has long lost the confidence of the sugar workers. On September 24 the Minister of Labour, introducing a Labour Relations Bill to compel employers to recognise a trade union holding a majority of members in a given industry, sought to carry it through its three readings as a matter of urgency and for this moved suspension of standing orders. The Speaker (nominated not elected) refused although it is provided that this suspension is valid, if the consent of the House were given (and it was clear that the House would consent, since the People's Progressive Party had an obvious majority). The P.P.P. members left the House in protest against this ruling.

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all wars: and we passed a resolution in the House protesting about the Rosenberg case.

We refused to fraternise with the Governor and the officials. Our Ministers refused to play ball in secret meetings of the Executive Council and used their voting strength to fulfil Party pledges. Our Ministers refused to relinquish old trade union affiliations and continued as active trade unionists. We never forgot the struggle was not only one of day to day administration but of building the national liberation movement. We prepared the minds of people for that struggle by educating them in Party groups. We encouraged reading and discussion. Party membership increased two-fold and organised groups reached one hundred. We were helping little people to get a square deal in a thousand and one grievances. They were learning in only four months that People's Progressive Party government meant more equality of opportunity for the smaller man.

Our tremendous growth of strength and confidence from the Guianese, even to winning over civil servants and police to the Party, frightened the United Kingdom officials who saw their power waning. Despite official efforts at sabotage and the Governor's tricks of arranging the agenda of the Executive Council and postponing matters—also his frenzied visits around the country to gather personal support—we were still on the up-grade. The official element saw clearly that, despite all their efforts to split the Party and to undermine its influence and its popularity, and keeping Ministers tied to files, encouraging them to lose contact with the masses—the people were with us. The officials quickly learned that we were not of the same calibre as Gomez of Trinidad and Adams of Barbados and Bustamente of Jamaica. We would not forsake our principles upon receipt of high salaries and social prestige. Therefore in four months they were able to see that we remained what we were when we went to the electorate in April. There was no other way for them to remove the threat of final success of our movement for self government and eventual national independence but to use the most drastic means possible. They brought in the British Army to re-establish Colonial Office supremacy in Guiana.

Talk of a Communist coup and uprisings is more fantastic than Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Not one of the Party leaders had gone so far as to even think of guns and bombs. What need was there for terrorism when we were sailing smoothly and constitutional changes were fast approaching? Communism was made the

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bogey to re-establish the old order of graft, corruption, favouritism and soft jobs for civil servants deposed from India and Palestine.

Since October 9, the Party has called upon the Guianese to resist in every possible way the British action—in general strike, non-co-operation and non-violence. The people have contributed generously to a fund to send delegates abroad. There is no doubt that the tempers of workers have been aroused by police raids on leaders' houses and by the shocking refusal of governmental facilities for the departure abroad of Burnham and Jagan.

The present situation has only succeeded in making the picture of imperialism sharper in the minds of the masses who now see more clearly than a hundred lectures could tell what British colonialism means. They know too that this is an effort to break up forever their beloved Party and are united in their stand behind the movement.

We call upon the great freedom-loving Labour Movement of Britain to help us.

Without your help our struggle and the struggle of all colonial peoples for better living conditions and democratic government is in jeopardy. This blow is meant to strike fear in the hearts of all progressives abroad.

We have right on our side. We have done nothing but struggle honestly on behalf of thousands of poverty-stricken Guianese.

Our case rests with the good people of Britain.

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THE WAY ONWARD FROM MARGATE

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

WHAT lessons must socialists draw from the 1953 Labour Party Conference at Margate? What stage does it mark in the struggle to build a socialist Britain? a struggle which is yet far from victory, but cannot fail to win, in the long run, with hard work.

Superficially, Margate represents something of a victory for the right-wing leadership. Whilst it had to make concessions, it had its way, pretty largely, on most issues, in terms of votes. It saw its really dreadful 'Challenge to Britain' approved on a show of hands; it established a 'synthetic bonhomie' of unity; it kept its one representative on the constituency section of the National Executive and 'arranged' Mr. Morrison on to that body by the new democratic method, elaborated in Germany, France, Italy and elsewhere, of altering the rules whenever the democratic will of the people is in danger of having its way. By the use of all the stock Tory arguments in favour of private enterprise—trotted out so glibly that one wondered whether 'Mr. Cube' had joined the leaders—it made some progress towards heading off nationalisation of the industries at the heart of British capitalist economy (engineering, shipbuilding, chemicals, armaments and the land); and nationalisation, however unsatisfactorily it may be operated, does pave the way for approaching nearer to socialism in the long run, and does mobilise the spirit for the offensive in the immediate present.

But there were thorns among the roses for the right wing; when one looks a little more closely, one sees that it had plenty of trouble even before it met. Six months ago it would not have dreamt of putting out a foreign policy statement containing even half the admissions of fact about the American peril made in that which it published on the eve of the conference. That statement was obviously the product of the working of public opinion on the minds of the draftsmen during the long weeks between the birth of 'Challenge to Britain' and the birth of the statement. Whatever other faults it had, the statement did criticise the U.S.A., the war plans of Dulles and Rhee, the resurrection of German reactionary nationalism, and the Tory government's 'mishandling of approaches to the

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U.S.S.R.', and it did call for high-level four-power negotiations and the admission of People's China to the U.N.

The leadership thus started the conference with a partial concession which was intended to disarm the opposition. And in the conference itself it was faced by a steady minority vote on many important issues, averaging some $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions, nearly a third of the conference. It was so large indeed that something like two-thirds of it must at times have consisted of trade union votes. It saw, too, the unshaken will to advance of the rank and file members of constituency Labour Parties reflected once again in the solid vote for representatives on the National Executive Committee, who were regarded as in some degree in opposition to right-wing policy. On this vote the following needs to be said. It was generally believed, of course, that these representatives—the Bevanites—had played some part in making changes for the better in the Executive's statement on foreign policy. But the fact remains that, with the exception of a few speeches on East-West trade, all these N.E.C. members had before the conference ceased to play any notable part in the public fight for a socialist policy. At the conference itself they were almost completely silenced—except where, as in the case of Aneurin Bevan and Harold Wilson, they took the field *against* the progressive forces, and successfully opposed, on behalf of the N.E.C. resolutions pledging the next Labour Government to establish Health Centres and to nationalise the 'Big Five' private banks.

Yet the biggest event of the conference was a pointed one—the growing confidence of the socialist-minded constituency and trade union delegates as they realised that their alliance, in its hard core amounting perhaps to some 1,400,000 votes (reflected in the vote on 'socialisation of the essential industries' moved by Sheffield (Park) and East Salford), could win by bold fighting on many issues some much larger unions, such as the engineers and the railwaymen, in which militant opinions are advancing. (On nationalisation of armaments and chemicals the left-wing votes were respectively just above and just below 2,000,000).

This confidence showed itself in a series of bold, hard-hitting socialist attacks on the essence of the question under discussion—whether the working class or the capitalist class was to be the stronger, as a result of Labour Party activity—which would have been as welcome to the socialist pioneers as the purely Liberal arguments of the N.E.C. would have been revolting. The attacks won their reward, in a series of further unpremeditated concessions by

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the N.E.C. at the Conference itself. Among these must be numbered (i) acceptance of the emergency resolution of the engineers, constructional engineers, foundry workers, fire brigades, and electricians, denouncing the U.S.A. military pact with Franco (ii) acceptance of the Labour teachers' demand for the restoration to the programme of the comprehensive school from 11 to 18 (iii) acceptance of the Beckenham and Rochdale demand for 'immediate increases in benefits, pensions and allowances' and of an adequate minimum standard for old people and war pensioners (iv) a pledge that the next Labour Government 'will immediately implement the policy of equal pay for equal work' (Croydon West, Eccles and Swindon resolution).

The ovations which greeted each of these decisions were not directed to the Executive. They were a pledge that, whatever the capitalist press may say and whatever Deakin and Douglas may threaten ('don't force us into a position of breaking with the Party'), the fight for socialism will grow keener inside the Labour Party, and it will win more victories.

And now, as the conference closes, regretfully finding time too short to discuss the colonial problems on which depends the whole future of the world—including Mr. N.E.C. Morrison's 'jolly old Empire'—the progressive forces, those who really seek to bring the Labour Party to adopt a socialist policy and crystallise the determination of the masses to carry through that policy, have great tasks before them. To undertake these tasks efficiently they must begin by forming an estimate of the situation as it stands after Margate.

However conscious we may be of our ultimate strength, of our final victory, we must not cherish illusions. The position is not at the moment good; the delight of the Tory Press underlines this. The right wing is still, if shakily, in the saddle; any general election in the near future—i.e., before the general growing movement of public determination for a real policy of peace, East-West trade, and national independence has had time to force a change of outlook and policy—will be fought on a more or less right-wing policy, in a spirit of ambiguous unity—ambiguous because it is based on a programme very far from socialism.

(How, exactly, the leadership can really hope to win an election with such a policy, it is not easy to understand. The tragic truth is that, whilst it attaches—sensibly enough—tremendous importance to winning elections, it attaches—suicidally enough—even more to maintaining hostility to all Communist parties and all Socialist

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countries. And it is just as difficult, of course, for an average elector to understand what it is really seeking as a long-run objective; a Socialist Britain? an Imperialist Britain? a Tory Britain? a bankrupt Welfare State? an American colony? or just 'after us the deluge'? The only solution is, of course, to ensure that what *it* really seeks will not matter.)

If that is a correct analysis of the situation, then the progressive forces have urgent tasks, and this is an historic moment in which they must move intelligently into a new stage of the long struggle. It is a most hopeful struggle, part of the great struggle for peace, part of the main happy task of all the progressive Labour and Socialist political workers in the country. It is far more than just a move to correct some bad decisions at Margate. It *is* the fight toward the aim of socialism, carried forward in very encouraging conditions. They are, to my mind, encouraging for a number of reasons. To begin with, we are supported by the growing stream of public longing for peace, for independence, for a better economy, for friendship with the countries of the socialist world. Then we have the knowledge that seen more closely, the struggle for the future of the Labour Party is less than ever a clash between the Labour Party and the trade unions. It is on the contrary a line-up of most of the constituency parties with a substantial body of progressively-led trade unions, with the knowledge—a prime cause, no doubt, of the hysteria of O'Deakin—that quite small changes of balance in certain unions will produce a change similar to that which will come in the Security Council of U.N.O. when three of the Five Great Powers line up as U.S.S.R., People's China, and People's France. We have, too, the knowledge that, even if the tactical position and the limited objectives and policies of the Bevanites make it doubtful whether they can lead effectively in the full struggle, forces that can take the lead in the fight for a real socialist Labour Party are developing among active Labour Party members, and that it is becoming easier for these forces to find help and reinforcement in all circles to the left of the left of the Labour Party.

There is further, in my view, one serious point that must not be lost sight of, both as a warning and as an encouragement. The change of policy which is now essential for the advance of the Labour movement is a radical change of policy. We welcome any step taken toward support of a progressive policy, such as Great Power negotiations, or the recognition of the menace represented by the alliance with Franco and the rearmament of Adenauer. At

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the same time it is necessary to recognise that a limited, partial, adaptation of policy which continues to retain the essence of the old policy cannot solve the problems before us. So long as the central evils of the cold war, the American military alliance and the anti-socialist alignment remain, such a programme inevitably can find no remedy for our economic problems, and can find no secure basis for peace.

With the proclaimed object of achieving economic independence of America, the leadership of the Labour Party still supports policies which maintain our surrender to the ruling class of that country, and whilst discreetly exploiting anti-American sentiment it still ensures our remaining enslaved to American policy. It faces the wrong enemy, fights actively on the wrong side in the class war the existence of which it denies, and lines up behind the Tories. And, with equal inevitability, it increases the deep crisis of the country and the bankruptcy of the present Tory-Labour policy. In the end, if we did not stop it, it would destroy the country economically.

All that is at stake in the battle, and, on the other side of the picture, is peace and our whole Socialist future. That is why it is such a splendid battle to fight and to win. Nor must we—all the forces that can help—be slow in moving.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

THE WORKING CLASS RAISES THE BANNER

Outwardly the triumph of Reaction all along the line is complete. . . . But this is only the surface situation; and the capitalists and reformists, who are seeking to build from it their permanent lines for the new era, are taking a short view. The inner forces do not correspond with this outer situation. The intensified imperialist contradictions hasten the approach of new crises in the international situation. British capitalism has not solved its difficulties; the economic situation at present worsens, in spite of the triumphs of class peace; and Rationalisation only intensifies the problems. The resistance of the working class has not been broken; the militant core stands firm, united and active; the strike movement is slowly rising; and the signs of Left awakening increase.

From *The General Election and the Working Class*, by R.P.D., Notes of the Month, November 1928.

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LENIN'S Return in 1917

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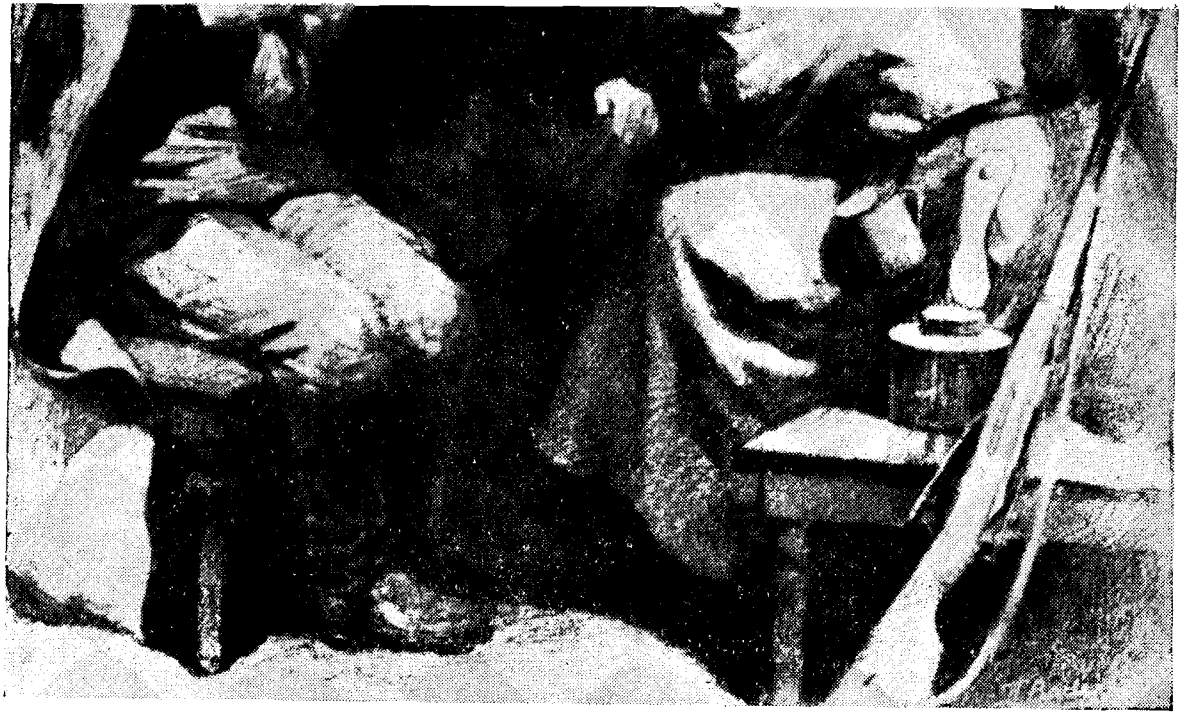

Lenin returns to his native land by way of Finland. In the train he meets the first Russian soldiers and listens eagerly to the first direct news of the events that have just taken place during his absence.

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THIS FIFTEEN PER CENT

WAL HANNINGTON

IN July, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, representing 38 unions, met the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation, and the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation in separate conferences and submitted the following claim: *'That an increase of 15 per cent. be granted on the consolidated time rates of all grades of adult male workers, both time and pieceworkers, the amount accruing to be added to earnings.'*

A claim was also submitted by the five unions that organise women in engineering, for a substantial wages increase for the adult women workers, sufficient to establish a minimum rate not less than the male labourer's rate. For many years past, the unions when making a national application for wage increases, have asked for a uniform advance for all adult male workers, skilled and unskilled alike. This time it is a percentage claim that would render different amounts of increase according to the existing levels of the base rates received. The reason for this change is to increase the skilled workers' differential. As a result of the past policy of uniform increases this differential has steadily narrowed down and the skilled men have been complaining that the marginal difference between their rates and the labourers' rate is not a fair reward for their training and craft knowledge and the care and attention which they have to constantly devote to their job. This was giving rise to a dangerous idea that the unions were neglecting the interests of the craftsmen and that separate claims for wage increases should be made on their behalf. Before the war the skilled man's rate was 28 per cent. above that of the labourer, today only 15 per cent. Therefore the Confederation of unions unanimously decided on a percentage claim this time in order to regulate the craft differential. In so doing, they have united the interests of the skilled and unskilled workers.

In the conference with the employers' Federations the unions advanced powerful arguments in support of the claim, particularly relating to the cost of living; increased productivity; and rising profits. The employers deferred reply and stated they must consult their district associations before fixing a date for resuming the conference. But the capitalist press lost no time in opening its campaign; that the claim was unreasonable; that the employers could

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not meet it; that it would give an advantage to our foreign competitors; that it would damage the whole prospect of economic recovery; and many other familiar forebodings.

What are the existing rates as laid down in agreement between the unions and the employers' Federations? It may surprise many readers to know that the nationally agreed rates for skilled men in engineering and shipbuilding for a 44-hour working week are as low as, £6 16s. 4d. and £6 18s. 6d. respectively. The labourers' rate is £5 18s. 4d. and the women's rate is £4 11s. 6d. The 15 per cent. claim means an increase of 20s. 6d. and 20s. 10d. to the skilled men respectively, and 17s. 8d. to the unskilled, on those rates.

True, earnings in many firms are in excess of these rates: plus payments have been set up by the activity of strong shop stewards' organisation while employers have had to offer higher shop rates and bonus payments to obtain suitable labour. But these plus payments are, in the main, not protected by any agreement. The employers' Federation do not officially recognise them. They regard them purely as expedient domestic arrangements and constantly endeavour to break them down. I know of non-federated firms paying over the nationally agreed rate which have been refused membership of the employers' Federation unless they adjust their wages structure to conform to the rate of the Federation. Thus there is no security in the plus payments. If the condition of the labour market was favourable to the employers, those payments would begin to disappear, not by any declaration of a national wage reduction, but by the simple process of discharging men and engaging others at wages in line with the nationally agreed rate. It would not be a new experience; we have seen it happen before, following the first world war.

But although the employers' Federation will not officially recognise wage levels above the national agreement they do not hesitate to use them as an argument against a national wage increase. They go further—they quote average earnings including the payments for overtime working. In the 1952 claim the employers quoted average earnings based upon a 49½-hour week instead of the normal 44-hour week, but the Ministry of Labour records for the same period showed that only 34.3 per cent. of the total workers in the industry were on overtime, whilst 0.6 per cent. were actually on short time. Two-thirds of the total workers in the industry, who were not working any overtime at all, were being falsely credited with earnings on the basis of the overtime worked by the other third.

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The length of the working day is a most important part of our standards of working-class conditions. Overtime working therefore means a lowering of those standards because it means the loss of leisure time and the strain of long hours of labour. It is morally wrong and downright impertinent for the employers' Federation to assess overtime at all in considering a claim for a wage increase on the normal working week.

The present low rate of wage, stated above, is sufficient justification in itself for the 15 per cent. increase apart from any other supporting factors. However, let us consider them.

According to the Official Government Index the cost of living since June, 1947 to June, 1953, has increased by 41 per cent. Food alone has increased 68 per cent., whilst in the same period the wages of engineering workers have only increased by 33.6 per cent. That comparison is all the more striking when we consider the remarkable increase which has taken place in production over the same period in engineering, shipbuilding and electrical goods. The Official Interim Index of Industrial Production shows that the volume of output per person employed increased by 51 per cent. between 1946 and 1953, whilst at the same time the real wages of the workers have fallen.

But if the workers have got nothing out of increased production, the employers have, as their constantly rising profits and high dividends show. Figures of the gross profits in each year since 1947 of a large number of representative firms in the engineering, aircraft, motors, and electrical trades, (as given since 1947 in the *Economist Records and Statistics* and the *Financial Times*) show a total increase of 117.2 per cent. in five years. This does much to explain where the value of the workers' increased production has gone. The payment of high dividends and the accumulation of large financial reserves has been taking place at an increasing rate every year since the end of the war and it is nothing short of a scandal that the national rate fixed by the employers' Federation for a skilled man for a normal working week should be as low as £6 16s. 4d. Mr. Harry Brotherton, in his Presidential Address to the Annual Meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions last August was able to declare that *'The average trading profits of companies in the engineering industry are equivalent to at least £4 per week per person employed'*. Could there be any more effective reply to the confusing propaganda of the Economic League and the Moral Rearmament crowd that 'it is no use asking for wage

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increases because it only sends up the cost of living'? It is not increases in wages that sends up the cost of living, but a combination of other factors over which the workers have no direct control, including, the insatiable greed of employers and traders; wasteful expenditure arising from the competitive and unplanned economy of capitalism; the army of parasites who derive a luxurious living under this system without doing any useful work; and, the heavy burden of government taxation to meet the cost of past wars and the mad preparation of new wars. These are the factors that send up prices and the workers are compelled to press for wage increases to maintain their standard of living. Therefore to talk of prices chasing wages is a false argument. The truth is the exact opposite. It doesn't require even an elementary knowledge of capitalist economics to know that if the employers are making a profit of £4 per week on every worker employed in the industry then the claim for the 15 per cent. increase in wages can be met more than twice over out of profits, without adding anything to the cost of products.

In this wages application a very important development has taken place in the attitude of the leadership of the Confederation, in that this time they have called for a great publicity campaign at national and local level in support of the claim. Millions of leaflets have been issued explaining the justice of the claim and union District Committees, Branches and Shop Stewards have been encouraged to organise special delegate conferences, factory-gate meetings, public meetings, and mass demonstrations. The effect has been a much higher level of activity in support of this claim than we have seen for many years, one of the outstanding events being the 'walk-out' at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of 8,000 shipyard workers at Southampton on September 30, for a mass meeting at the Guildhall to demand that the claim be met.

Unfortunately some of the national leaders, whilst having supported the resolution passed at the Annual Conference of the Confederation calling for the campaign, adopted the attitude that before developing it we should wait until the employers' Federation gave their reply without pressure! When we look back on the record of replies to wage applications made by this arrogant employers' Federation in the last thirty years we find no grounds whatever for believing that they might now readily make concessions. Some trade union leaders refused to participate in any public agitation for the claim until they heard the reply. Well, they no longer have that excuse. On October 7, they heard it and were left in no doubt that the

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employers were still running true to form. The answer was a flat rejection, and the unions must now decide what they are going to do to change that answer. The resolution carried unanimously at the Confederation Annual Conference in August declared that the claim must be met *in full*. If that is to be realised it will require something more than argument at the conference table. It will require action at the place that will hurt the employer most, namely, on the workshop floor.

By this flat rejection the employers' Federation have, in effect, declared that £6 16s. 4d. per week is to remain as the national rate for a skilled man. They have swept aside the powerful arguments of the unions which proved the justice of the claim and have made a display of challenging the unions to combat. They are bluffing, as they have done before, in the hope that the leadership of the unions will succumb to their outward facade of strength. But there must be no retreat by the unions. The time has come to make a firm stand if we intend to end this disgraceful wage-rate for engineers.

The fact that in many factories the workers have, by strong shop steward organisation, built up shop rates above the national rate, shows that the national leadership of the unions is today tailing behind the movement at workshop level. The collective national strength of the unions is not being fully exerted. Unless we show a readiness to use that national strength we shall continue to suffer the indignity of a nationally agreed skilled rate that is lower than the rate of skilled men in almost every other industry, and more than £1 per week lower than the starting rate of a junior policeman.

Engineering workers are looking for a strong lead this time from the union executives. Opinions are being widely expressed by rank and file members that action stronger than a ban on overtime and piecework is required. They point out, quite rightly, that many factories are not working overtime, and where they are, only sections are on overtime and not everybody is working piecework. To operate a complete ban would therefore involve only a section of the factory in action and would tend to create division in the ranks. If the struggle is to be confined to limited forms of action they prefer a series of token stoppages for an hour or more, factory by factory, or preferably, united national stoppages for twenty-four hours, to be repeated until the employers settle the claim.

The recent strike tactics of the electricians in the electrical contracting industry has made a favourable impression on the minds of engineering workers and has given rise to the idea of selecting

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certain of the large firms, whose representatives have a decisive voice in the policy of the Engineering Employers' Federation, and stopping those firms completely, and, if necessary, levying the rest of the membership to pay full wages to the workers at those firms as long as the struggle lasts.

The outstanding features of the electricians' strikes (which involved less than six thousand workers, alarmed the employing class, and were only called off pending the Government Court of Enquiry) was that this struggle was planned and led by the union executive. This most important development in British trade unionism has been noted and appreciated by the rank and file because it stands out in contrast to the practice so long prevalent, that the men on the job have had to take action first and seek official approval afterwards—and seldom obtain it. The E.T.U. method of struggle, if applied in the engineering industry, has the advantage of bringing the entire body of workers in a given factory into action together, thereby maintaining their unity, and completely stopping the work of that firm.

These are some of the ideas that are current amongst the rank and file today. They are considering lines of action, and if the union executives will respond to that spirit and make a call, either for a partial or complete stoppage of work, they will receive a united response from the workers that will shatter the resistance of the employers to this wage claim, and win a resounding victory for trade unionism.

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TO SAVE PEACE IN EUROPE

QUÆSTOR

IT is now a commonplace that the hopes aroused by Churchill's speech of May 11, proposing an informal meeting of heads of the great Powers to discuss outstanding problems, have faded. Even Churchill himself, at his speech to the Conservative conference at Margate (October 10), could only comment on his proposal that 'no one can say it is dead'. A more truthful comment is the front-page remark of the *Daily Telegraph* diplomatic correspondent (October 16) that 'relations between the West and Russia have begun to harden into familiar lines after a period, following Stalin's death, when it seemed possible they might alter.' But this is not the whole picture, as a backward glance over the whole picture will show.

The diplomatic history of 1953 did not begin with Churchill's speech. In March the new Soviet leaders made a series of offers to negotiate and co-operate with the capitalist states (Malenkov's speeches on March 9 and 15). American officials, British Cabinet Ministers and the jackals of Fleet Street joined in jeering at the offers and in malignant abuse of their authors. Eden and Butler, the same month, agreed in Washington not to negotiate with the U.S.S.R. until the 'West' was stronger—in plain language, until Western Germany was remilitarised. On April 16 Eisenhower followed up with an insolent series of conditions which the Russians must fulfil before any negotiations. This aroused violent criticism in Britain and other countries. *Pravda* (April 24) declared the Soviet Union's 'readiness to discuss and settle in a friendly way urgent international questions', but rejected the attempt to impose preliminary conditions. On May 11, Churchill made his speech, followed by Attlee in similar vein next day. The speeches aroused world-wide enthusiasm among ordinary people. The immediate response: an American demand for a preliminary meeting, at which the U.S.A., Britain and France could 'gang up'. *Pravda* (May 24) welcomed the proposal for a conference without preliminary conditions, but warned everyone against the ganging-up proposal, saying clearly that the U.S.S.R. would participate in a conference only 'if the parties came to the meeting without any preliminary fixed demands'.

But that was the very reason why the United States, British and French governments proceeded to draw up such fixed demands.

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At their Washington Conference, in July, they once again agreed on preliminary conditions to be presented to the U.S.S.R. before any top-level meeting could take place: a meeting of Foreign Ministers *only*, discussions on German elections and Austria *only*, remilitarisation of Germany within the 'European Defence Community' *in any case*. *Pravda* once again (July 23) made quite clear that such tactics could lead nowhere. In two Notes—on August 4 and August 15—the Soviet Union offered alternative proposals, based on respect for the views of all concerned: namely, that the *whole* German question be considered, not merely the aspects arbitrarily selected by the three Western Powers, and that 'measures to reduce tension in international relations' be also discussed. The Note of August 15 mentioned the subjects which the U.S.S.R. wanted to have discussed in connection with Germany—not unreasonable, since the other three Powers had begun by laying down the questions which they wanted discussed. The Soviet Union took the view that no easing of international tension is possible without the participation of China: and in a third Note, on September 28, it proposed two conferences of Foreign Ministers—one of Five Powers (including China) to discuss reducing international tension, and one of the Four Powers (without her) to discuss 'the German question, including all proposals put forward in the course of preparing the meeting'—i.e. those put forward by *both* sides. What could be more reasonable? And indeed *The Times* itself, in a leading article (September 30) admitted that 'these proposals have a healthy ring about them, and open up pleasant prospects', that the proposal of a Five-Power meeting 'is one to catch the imagination', and that the Four-Power meeting on Germany 'has undoubted attractions'. So why have the American, British and French Governments not accepted the offer?

For the very same reason as before—that acceptance would mean giving up their previously determined fixed conditions, which they knew beforehand would be rejected. There cannot be the least doubt about that: *The Times* editorial itself admitted that one particular set of conditions in the case of Germany are the subject of 'Western insistence', and that the Five-Power meeting could not take place unless other preliminary conditions (connected with the Korean political conference) were accepted. In other words, the Western Powers don't want a conference, and framed preliminary conditions so as to ensure that none should take place. No wonder the Soviet proposals were left for seven weeks without an answer, while the experts in sabotage of world peace and the frustration of

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the hopes of nations got busy, doing their utmost to worsen the prospects of agreement.

One way was to spread the maximum misrepresentations of the Soviet position—incidentally it should be remembered that, whereas the Soviet newspapers invariably publish the full texts of Allied Notes and Soviet replies, the British public is denied the full texts of Soviet Notes by most of its newspapers. Thus the *Daily Telegraph* said (September 30) the Soviet Note assumed 'that the formation of an all-German government would precede elections': in reality, it proposed only that 'certain all-German functions', in the first instance holding all-German elections, would be assumed by a temporary joint body, 'retaining the governments now existing in Eastern and Western Germany'. 'The resistance to a Four-Power meeting has come from Moscow' declared the same paper brazenly on October 12, ignoring that all Moscow is resisting is a framed-up, gangster-type meeting in which all the situations are rigged beforehand. The Note 'showed no eagerness for a meeting at any level', Anthony Eden stated, setting facts at defiance, on October 8. The Russians apparently could not agree to the western demand for free elections in the eastern zone of Germany, said *The Times* leader on October 12—having deprived its readers of the chance of reading the Soviet Note, and thus of knowing that it really wanted *all-German* free elections, without 'impermissible pressure by foreign authorities on the entire course of the preparations for and conduct of the elections'.

Another way of sabotage was to increase the pressure and propaganda for remilitarisation of Western Germany, which the British and American Governments know full well is the certain way of preventing an agreed settlement of international questions. In this respect it is precisely Eden and Churchill, the supposed champions of negotiation, who in recent weeks have come to the fore. Germany must bear her share of the burden of 'defence', said Eden at the Conservative Party Conference—'keep in mind the export position if she does not'. Yet it is notorious that it is precisely with financial assistance from the U.S.A., the government of which is spurring on German rearmament, that West German exporters are successfully invading British markets. Germany 'has a part to play in rebuilding Europe', said the Foreign Secretary—when forty years of history show that her 'part', when armed and under monopoly-capitalist control, is not to rebuild Europe but to destroy it. The German army would be 'under joint European control', asserted Eden—

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when it is plain common sense that there would be no permanent way of holding in check the 12 (or more) German divisions, once formed under Nazi-Junker generals. 'They might start as the N.C.O.'s of the European army, they would end up as its field-marshals', as the *Daily Express* wrote, in a lucid interval, on October 9. 'The European army is an illusion', writes a French general in the *Daily Telegraph* (October 13). But Churchill was undeterred by this, in his speech to the Conservatives on October 10. He spoke admiringly of 'the new Germany which Dr. Adenauer is building'—just as in *Hitler and his Choice* (1935) he wrote of the Nazi blackguard 'at the head of the great nation he has raised from the dust'. He promised to go ahead with building the German forces—either within the 'European army' or allied with the Western Powers. And he attempted to justify this policy with the wild fantasy that 'the Soviet armies in Europe, even without their satellites, are four times as strong as all the Western allies put together'. In reality, General Gruenther, supreme commander of the American-controlled forces in Europe, had stated four weeks before that there were 50 'Western' divisions from Norway to Italy, excluding Greece and Turkey, and only 30 Soviet divisions (*U.S. News and World Report*, September 11).

In recent weeks the general alarm in France and Britain at the rebuilding of German militarism has produced yet a third variety of manoeuvre, to distract the attention of the nations. This is to drag out of its well-earned dusty limbo the idea of a new 'Locarno Pact'—from the scheme which, concluded in 1925, was supposed to guarantee British, Belgian and Italian support to France if she were attacked by Germany, and to Germany if attacked by France. One would have thought that an obvious argument against the proposal is the failure of the earlier Locarno when put to its first test—Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936—although in fact that failure was the less surprising because the real purpose of Locarno (proclaimed in 1925 by Tory Ministers themselves) was, while if possible closing the door to German aggression in the west, to keep it invitingly open in eastern Europe. Moreover, there appear to be differences among the western governments as to what precise form the 'guarantee' to the Soviet Union is to take. After all, even political infants might notice that it is a peculiar thing to build up a new German military machine, difficult to control even within a 'European army', and then, having admitted that this may cause 'anxiety' to the U.S.S.R., to offer the U.S.S.R. guarantees against it. Why not instead refrain from militarising

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Western Germany and try direct talks with the U.S.S.R. about mutual and joint disarmament? But that is the last thing that Churchill wants—and here the real purpose of the original, 1925 Locarno is recalled in sinister and unmistakable fashion.

For, as has been pointed out in the press already, on September 28, Mr. Nutting, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, revealed at Bonn, that any such agreement must 'explicitly omit' references to the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe. The newspapers next day differed as to Nutting's reasons for this—whether the Western Powers objected to the 'condition of bondage' of these countries (*Manchester Guardian*)—i.e. to their not being under Anglo-Franco-American-German control as in the good old days—or to their frontiers (*The Times*) or territories reclaimed from Germany (*Daily Telegraph*). But they made no bones about the main point. And the *Daily Telegraph* later (October 9) re-emphasised that the proposed guarantees 'do not include or imply approval of Russia's dominion over her satellites'—Tory double-talk meaning that a militarised Germany is *not* warned off aggression against Poland and Czechoslovakia, for the 'greater living space' which Adenauer, following Hitler's precedent, began to demand the very day after the West German elections of September 6. And as both Poland and Czechoslovakia have a mutual assistance pact with the U.S.S.R. against aggression by Germany or any Power allied with her, the effect of such a 'guarantee' would be to *encourage* a new war, first between Germany and Poland or Czechoslovakia, then between Germany and the U.S.S.R., and finally involving the whole world.

This is the real meaning of Tory policy—for Mr. Nutting makes no statement without consulting the Foreign Office—and this is the substance behind the chatter of a 'new Locarno', 'guarantees to the U.S.S.R.', etc. This is the sinister and bloody design which is being palmed off by the Western governments as a substitute for the Great Power high-level talks, and a Five-Power Peace Pact, which the peoples are demanding. This is the explanation of the sabotage of every Soviet move towards agreement, in the last nine months. It is the reality behind the Western Powers' Note of October 18, which avoided acceptance of a Five-Power meeting, made even consideration of it depend on the outcome of the Korean political conference and a Four-Power meeting on Germany, and gave no undertaking even to discuss Soviet proposals at the latter—while talking vaguely of 'other major questions' which agreement could open up (doubtless the precious 'security guarantee').

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By the side of this picture, even the dirty little pettifogging pin-pricks at the United Nations with which the British Government has replied to the manifold gestures of Soviet goodwill—the gerrymandering of Turkey, until lately a Near Eastern State, as an 'East European' member of the Security Council in place of Poland, the rightful claimant; or the support given to American rejection of the Soviet proposal to admit all hitherto excluded states to U.N.O., to whichever camp they belong.

Thus, this November at the return of the annual celebration of a Month of Friendship between this country and the Soviet Union, there is a vast responsibility devolving upon the Labour movement. For at Morecambe, last year, the Labour Party conference resolved that it was opposed to the use of British arms 'to impose on any other country changes in government or internal policies, or to vary by force existing treaties', or 'as a means of enforcing territorial changes in Eastern Europe or elsewhere'. It warned the movement 'against the danger of supporting anti-working class forces in international affairs'—particularising the Franco régime which has now been made the principal U.S. base in the Mediterranean. At Margate, this year, even the right-wing Executive which once more imposed acceptance of the 'Atlantic Treaty' war bloc in its resolution, was obliged by rank and file pressure to pledge the Labour Party 'to make every effort to foster improvement in international relations and to end the Cold War', and scored 'the failure of the Western Powers to maintain the initiative to break the East-West deadlock'. It expressed 'concern at the resurgence of German reactionary nationalism', and pressed for a Four-Power agreement on the peaceful reunification of Germany urging that until further efforts to secure this have been made 'there should be no German rearmament'.

There is a contradiction of course between these new demands and the continuing propaganda for N.A.T.O.—but it is not insoluble, because it is the contradiction between the hangover of illusions, credulity and unscrupulous deception of the people by their supposed leaders in the years after 1945, and the healthy, indignant socialist instincts rising anew, with marvellous freshness and strength, in the British working-class movement. Inch by inch, during the past two years, the combined efforts of the Chinese People's Republic and the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the pressure of popular anger in Britain on the other, have dragged the cause of world peace nearer to safety in the Far East. It is high

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time (and British-Soviet Friendship Month this November is the occasion) for the main force of the British people for peace—organised Labour—to intervene directly to defeat the warmongers in Europe as well, by insisting on the acceptance of the proposals for a Five-Power Conference to reduce international tension, and a Four-Power Meeting to discuss all aspects of the German problem.

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THE THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

JUDITH TODD

THIRTY-SIX years is a short time in the life of a nation, but how many light-years seem to separate the struggling Russia of 1917 from the great world power of today. Yet from 1917 to 1953 there is a strict continuity in her own development and in the inspiration she has given to millions by her energies and her example.

The men and women who shook the world in 1917 were soldiers in tattered uniforms with scraps of red cloth tied to their bayonets, sailors with bandoliers slung over their black blouses and striped jerseys, factory workers still in the grime of the shops, peasants whose only land was the mud caked on their rags. But they were led by men who knew where they were going and how to get there, because as Marxists they understood the laws of social change as well as the laws of nature. From this springs the continuity between the struggling Russian republic of 1917 and the strong socialist brotherhood, thirty-six years later, of the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, and the People's Democracies.

By the application of Marxist principles, said Stalin, 'Socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science'; and the thirty-sixth year of Soviet power provides many examples of how this works out in practice. Scientific understanding of the laws of social change means that the goals of human achievement can be planned for in advance, which is a much more human method of progress than the play of the market, 'muddling through', or reliance on 'countervailing tendencies', to use the latest cant term for explaining away the lack of free enterprise in the 'free world'.

October 1, 1953, was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the launching of the First Five Year Plan. In 1928 it was necessary 'to *create* an industry able to re-equip and re-organise, not only the whole of industry, but also transport and agriculture, on the basis of socialism'. In 1953 the U.S.S.R. is successfully carrying out the Fifth Five Year Plan, which increases industrial production at a rate of growth 50 per cent. above that attained by capitalist countries even *during exceptional boom periods; and increases labour productivity* in industry 6.2 times compared with 1928. While the 1951-1955 Plan had provided for a greatly increased production of consumer

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goods by 1955, Premier Malenkov was able to announce, in his budget speech of August 1953, that owing to the successes already achieved in heavy industry, it was possible to attain the higher production of consumer goods 'much sooner' than 1955.

The distinctive Marxist method of open criticism of shortcoming and the adaptation of practice to changed and changing conditions, was applied by Malenkov in the same speech. He drew attention to weaknesses in agricultural development, and outlined a series of measures for assisting the collective farmers, not by the method of the vague threats of disasters to come so much favoured by Chancellors of the Exchequer, but with the assurance of 'enormous possibilities for the fulfilment of our main task—the maximum satisfaction of the steadily growing material and cultural requirements of the people'.

Other evidence of growing Soviet strength during the year have been the continued maintenance of the peace initiative, combined with a reduction of budget expenditure on defence from 23.6 per cent. in 1952 to 20.8 per cent. in 1953. The Decree on Amnesty of March 8, which stressed that in present conditions it was unnecessary to keep in detention people whose crimes no longer represented a serious danger to the State *'and who by their conscientious attitude to work have proved their right to return to an honest working life'*, was a tribute to the success of a truly reformative penal system. In spite of the Battle Act, the U.S.S.R.'s international trade has increased, not only with China and the People's Democracies, but with a number of capitalist countries, including France, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Argentina and Iceland, who signed trade agreements during the year.

It is against the background of a great cumulative effort that the Soviet people have been able to enjoy, since April 1953, the benefits of the sixth major price reduction since the war, affecting all articles of food and personal and household requirements. For them all food prices have come down by a third to a half, as compared with 1947. In some other countries nearer home, news about prices deals only too frequently with price increases, from which public characters like Mr. Cube and the holders of transport stock alone benefit.

Further evidence of progress, which is rising literally before the eyes of the Soviet people, has been the development of the construction projects and the opening of the new Moscow University. At the Kuibyshev Hydro-electric Station, for example, the huge capital installations necessary for such a vast work had been completed,

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and a start made on the main structures, within three years of the announcement of the scheme. At the Stalingrad Hydro-electric Station, the bottom of its foundation pit, protected by giant cofferdams, was by August, 30 feet below the level of the Volga. These and other schemes are not only an investment in capital goods, but an investment in humanity: for thousands of the builders are receiving secondary or higher education on the spot after working hours.

The magnificent new buildings of Moscow University were opened on September 1, at the beginning of the new academic year. The 32-storey main building, with its 148 lecture halls, over a thousand scientific laboratories and premises for a library of 1,200,000 books, have taken only four years to complete. Moscow University itself is nearly 200 years old, but it was not till 1917 that, together with all the other Soviet universities, it was opened to the sons and daughters of the working people of all the Soviet nationalities. The historic buildings in the centre of the city, which thirty-six years ago received the first worker-students, are now used for the faculties of the humanities: these can thus expand in premises which formerly housed all the University departments.

The spirit of scientific enquiry—the dialectical approach—which is inculcated and fostered by Moscow University and its many sisters, is not a cloistered philosophy. It is the same philosophy of action which informed Lenin and his colleagues of 1917, and those who succeeded them in the leadership of Party and government, throughout these thirty-six years. It is a philosophy which recognises the world as a ceaseless process of movement and change, and the commitment of all to one or the other side of a ceaseless struggle. This is the philosophy which gives the Soviet Union its peculiar strength, and enables it to withstand the severest blows, whether these come from its enemies, by direct attack or cloak-and-dagger treachery, or from natural causes as by the death of its great leader, Joseph Stalin. The death of Stalin, in the thirty-sixth year of the state which he did so much to create and preserve, left a sense of loss in millions of hearts, not only in his own country. It is perhaps the greatest tribute to his outstanding qualities that under his guidance his own people reached such a pitch of strength and stability that the year 1953 was marked, not as the year in which the U.S.S.R. suffered a crippling loss, but as a year which saw further advances in the building of socialism and the progress to communism.

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This continuity of progress is above all the practical result of the doctrine of collective leadership which lies at the centre of Communist Party organisation, together with the 'common proletarian discipline, *equally* binding on all Party members, both leaders and rank-and-file'. The formulation so often made by Lenin and Stalin had been stressed once again at the 19th Party Congress in 1952, and was repeated forcefully following the disclosure, in July 1953, of L. P. Beria's treachery. Stronger measures were taken to tighten up Party discipline, and at the same time to increase democracy within the Party, and to develop the practice of criticism and self-criticism. In the dialectical process of creating a new society, a new, Soviet, man, there must inevitably be individual failures to apply these essential doctrines in practice. But the existence of the U.S.S.R. today, in its firmly-rooted vigour, witnesses the tenacity with which the Party as a whole, during thirty-six years, has displayed what *Pravda* summed up as 'the ability to act collectively, the readiness to subordinate the will of individual comrades to that of the collective—this for us, said Comrade Stalin, is real Party courage'.

It is this continuity which relates the achievements of 1953 to the decisions taken at the 19th Party Congress in 1952, and that Congress to those which preceded it. And it is precisely this continuity of collective leadership which makes nonsense of the vulgar misinterpretations of Soviet affairs made by Western 'experts'. The derision with which they greeted Stalin's forecast of deepening rifts between the capitalist powers, set against the rapid fulfilment of that forecast, is only one instance of obvious misjudgments which should by now have shamed rational beings into silence. Instead we have received a series of uncouth observations after the death of Stalin, based on a 'struggle for power' drawn from first-hand experience of the mortal struggles round the throne of an aging British premier, or the choice of an American Presidential candidate in a smoke-filled room. As the Soviet construction schemes rise in their majesty, we are told that they have been shelved as 'Stalinist'. As the successful peace policy of the Soviet Union enables it and its fellow democracies to devote less of their resources to defence and more to consumption goods, we are told that this is due to (*a*) a reversal of 'Stalinist aggression' (*b*) N.A.T.O.'s increased military strength (*c*) fear of discontent among the masses (*d*) a crumbling economic system (*e*) the U.S.A.'s monopoly of the Hydrogen bomb (*f*) the U.S.S.R.'s possession (announced in July 1953) of the hydrogen bomb (*g*) the fact that these steps ought to have been taken long

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since (*h*) the fact that they cannot be undertaken now. William of Ockham was a 13th century English philosopher who held that you should not multiply entities beyond what is necessary: he would have had a field-day among those who, after thirty-six years, cannot admit that 'only the collective political experience, the collective knowledge, of the Party's Central Committee, founded on the scientific basis of Marxist-Leninist theory, ensures the correctness of the leadership shown to the Party and country, the stability and solidarity of the Party's ranks, and the successful building of Communism in one country'.

MANUAL FOR POLITICS TODAY

WILLIAM GALLACHER

BACK before the First World War a lad named Norman Angell wrote a book entitled *The Great Illusion*. The great illusion being the idea that any nation could benefit from a European War. But this 'great illusion' was a moderate affair compared to the illusion on which the policy of the Labour Party was built by its petty-bourgeois leaders. Away with Marx and the class war, they cried. Such a teacher and such teaching may be good enough for 'foreigners', but there is no place for them in England. Here we do things differently. Here we can, by a continuous process of social reforms change capitalist society into socialist society, without the slightest disturbance of the social fabric. And just recently the secretary of the Labour Party informed the world at large that labour policy was based, not on Marxism but on Methodism. At the recent Labour Party conference his pal Deakin, far from preaching Methodism, was threatening murderism—murder of the Labour Party.

The great illusion of reforming capitalism out of existence arose when British imperialism was ruthlessly exploiting millions of oppressed colonial slaves. From the loot thereby obtained the bourgeoisie could afford to make certain concessions to the working class in the shape of social reforms. But now British capitalism and British imperialism are in deep and insoluble crisis. No more 'easy' reforms. On the contrary, the watchword of the Labour leaders is harder work and sacrifice. Now it has become obvious that if the workers want anything they've got to fight for it. But the present leadership is quite unfitted to lead a fight against capitalism. They have become a bulwark for capitalism against the advance of the

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working class. The 'great illusion' has been blown away sky high by the revolt of the colonial peoples and the general crisis of capitalism. The Labour leaders can no longer offer a policy and programme suited to the needs of the working class. 'Challenge to Britain' is an exposure of their political bankruptcy. Their wretched performance at the Margate conference was further proof of this.

Now the delegates and the members as a whole, if they wish to save the movement from the decay and death prepared for it by its petty-bourgeois leaders, must turn to a study of Marxism and master the method of conducting the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. And how better could they start than by a study of Stalin's *Collected Works*.* What a valuable mine of Marxism is here for the British workers. I wish I could see every rank and file delegate who attended Margate with a copy of the third volume. As I read, I marvelled. Where is there anything in literature like this—so clear, so simple, so deep and so profound. Never an obscure sentence or an obscure thought. Here is a comrade who knew how to present an issue in its simplest form and how to provide the answer so that any interested worker could read and understand. This volume deals with the period from March 1917 (shortly before Lenin's return to Russia) till the eve of the Great October Revolution, a difficult, complicated and extremely dangerous period during which so many alleged socialists went completely astray. But through it all, calm and steady, there is the wise guiding hand of this great disciple of the mighty Lenin.

Read it, my young comrades of the Labour movement; please read it and see the lessons there for the situation that now confronts the workers of this country. On page 12, we get the all-important question presented: 'How can the incipient counter-revolution be curbed? What conditions are necessary for the victory of the Russian revolution?' In every page of the book in one form or another the answer is hammered home. Power in the hands of the workers and poor peasants; in the factories; on the land; in the army. The workers and poor peasants. Never any doubt, never any ambiguity. There lies the victory for the revolution. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (the Attlees, Deakins and Morrisons) were horrified at this and the advice the Bolsheviks were giving to the workers in the factories and to the poor peasants regarding seizure of the land. In the article 'The Land to the Peasants' we read (p. 37):

*J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (452 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 5s.)

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We are told that immediate seizure of the landed estates would disrupt the 'unity' of the revolution by splitting off the 'progressive strata' of society from it. But it would be naive to think that it is possible to advance the revolution without quarrelling with the manufacturers and landlords. . . . People who want to influence the course of the revolution must realise once and for all: (1) that the main forces of the revolution are workers and poor peasants who, owing to the war, are now wearing soldiers' uniform: (2) that as the revolution grows deeper and wider the so-called 'progressive elements' who are progressive in word but reactionary in deed, will 'split off' from it inevitably.

Surely that is particularly applicable to what is going on in Britain. The right-wing leaders (typical Mensheviks) put a programme to save capitalism. The rank and file want to fight for the overthrow of capitalism—for socialism. 'You'll split the movement' they're told. Isn't it significant that it is always the right-wing leaders who raise this bogey? What do they mean? They mean that if the movement adopts a policy of fighting capitalism, they will refuse to put it into operation, and if such a policy is pushed too far, they will get out. Get out and good riddance, the membership should say and get ahead with the great task that lies before them—the task of transforming society. For God's sake, what loss would they be? People who put this point of view are not helping the movement forward, they're holding it back. Deakin made a threat of taking his union out of the Labour Party if the rank and file didn't accept the backward lead. But he couldn't do it if he tried. His co-delegates in all probability advised that he had made a bad blunder by his threat, hence his later fit of indignation in the course of which he made a complete retraction of his own threat and knocked hell out of the absent O'Brien.

To paraphrase Stalin, 'people who want to influence the course of the working-class movement in Britain must realise once and for all: (i) that the main forces for the overthrow of capitalism are the workers and the struggling colonial peoples: (ii) in the fight for the overthrow of capitalism, the right-wing labour and trade union leaders will inevitably "split off" and go over to the side of the enemy'.

And on this question of the colonial peoples there is a really splendid statement in his 'Speech in support of Comrade Lenin's Resolution on the current situation'. Following the speech there is 'Reply to the discussion on the National Question' from which I take this:

There is movement for independence in Ireland. On whose side are we, comrades? We are either for Ireland or for British imperialism. And

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I ask: Are we on the side of the peoples which are resisting oppression, or on the side of the classes which are oppressing them?

We say, that inasmuch as the Social-Democrats (Bolshevik, W.G.) are striving for a socialist revolution, they must support the revolutionary movement of the peoples, which is directed against imperialism.

The lesson there for us is clear and unavoidable. With the people 'resisting oppression' in Malaya and Kenya or with those who are oppressing them? And now with warships rushed to Guiana, *whose side are we on?*

We are told in the Daily Press that the Queen signed the Order in Council revoking the Constitution 'on her return from church on Sunday morning'. They're in a hurry to get the guns going off in another part of the world. Why the rush? The people there voted the 'wrong' way. They voted for the Progressive Party and now there is talk of nationalising the sugar industry where the fearfully exploited workers are on strike against their British overlords. The miners here fought their mine-owner overlords for generations before they succeeded in getting nationalisation of the mines. Their conditions in the years gone by were bad, but nothing to those of the sugar workers in Guiana. Are they for the people resisting oppression or for the gun-boats and marines? Those who desire to advance towards socialism can have only one answer to such a question.

In an article on the municipal election campaign, Stalin makes a deadly exposure of the Mensheviks and their two-faced policy of saying one thing and doing its opposite. He goes on: 'The more adroitly they mask themselves with talk of "freedom" and "revolution" the more determinedly and ruthlessly must they be fought'. Here we are getting a surfeit of talk on 'freedom' from Labour leaders and their Tory associates. The 'free' nations. The latest addition to this sorry conglomeration is 'Franco' Spain. A resolution was passed on this at Margate but will the Labour leaders put up a fight? Not they. They are for the 'free' nations, and the common feature of all of these, with Franco Spain, as with the others, is freedom for the capitalists to rob the workers. Yes, the more they talk of 'freedom' and 'socialism' as a mask to cover their subservience to capitalist exploitation at home and imperialist oppression abroad, the more ruthlessly must we expose them.

In the July days the workers were defeated and the counter-revolution was victorious. The articles on these events should be earnestly studied. I will only point one lesson. Maybe Bevan and

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his associates will take note of it. Maybe! Writing of the 'victory of the Cadets' he says:

> For the question at issue was: Either the war goes on—in which case complete dependence on the British and American money market, the rule of the cadets, and the revolution curbed . . . or, transfer of the power to the revolutionary class. There was no third way, and the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries who sought for a third way were bound to go down.

Do you hear that, Mr. Bevan? Are you still looking for a third way between the workers and the capitalist class? You'll never find it. You're 'bound to go down'. Don't worry about your own personal advance—it's the advance of the working class that matters!

And now a special word to two of Bevan's lieutenants, Foot and Crossman. I can still see them standing there in the House of Commons talking about 'our social revolution', while at the same time supporting every American demand for increased armaments. What has happened to 'our social revolution'? It has vanished like the mirage it really was. Gone, never to return. The real thing will come only when the workers take over power for themselves.

But here is Stalin making a 'Report on the Political Situation' at the Sixth Congress of the Party. And here I may say that these reports and answers to questions must also get special attention. But then I'd have to say the same for every part of the book. I must repeat there's never been anything like it in the realm of literature. In one passage he refers to those who want:

> A little revolution for the sake of a big war. The workers and peasants on the other hand, were out for a thorough break-up of the old order . . . a great revolution and peace.

What do you think of it, Mr. Foot? Will you write about it in the *Sunday Pictorial*, Mr. Crossman? Are you for a 'little revolution and a big war or for a thorough break-up of the old order—and peace'? There is no third way.

Following the July days and the arrest of many Bolsheviks, with Lenin in hiding and most of the printing presses smashed, Stalin has an article on 'Two Conferences'. It is extremely interesting particularly when we read 'They say that Bolshevism is dead and buried. But our esteemed grave-diggers are showing undue haste in burying us. We are still alive and the bourgeoisie will have plenty of occasion to tremble at the sound of our voice'. And in the weeks that followed, that voice, the voice of the workers and poor peasants, grew ever stronger and louder and the bourgeoisie and their menshevik allies had every reason to tremble. July 24 'They say that

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Bolshevism is dead and buried'. Then in a few short, but fateful months, October 24, this:—

> The Kishin-Konovalov government must be replaced by a government of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' deputies. That which was not done in February must be done now. Thus and thus alone, can peace, bread, land and liberty be won.
>
> Workers, soldiers, peasants, Cossacks and all working people:
>
> Do you want the present government of landlords and capitalists to be replaced by a new government, a government of workers and peasants? . . .
>
> If you want this, muster all your forces, rise as one man, organise meetings and elect your delegations, and through them, lay your demands before the Congress of Soviets which opens tomorrow in the Smolny. . .
>
> The power must pass into the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' deputies.

The stage was set. The revolution was about to take an accounting of the bourgeoisie. Every Party comrade, every active member of the Labour Party, everyone who desires to influence the course of the working-class movement towards its goal of socialism, must get this volume. It is absolutely essential for an understanding of the art of transforming bourgeois class society into the classless society that a foundation of socialist economy will surely one day establish.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Three Months in New China, by K. Naikunthawasan. People's Press, Ceylon; Central Books, London. 148 pp. 4s. 6d.
Labor Fact Book. Labor Research Association, New York. 160 pp. $2.50.
13 Communists Speak to the Court. New Century Publishers, New York; Collet's, London. 95 pp. 3s. 6d.
The Changing Law, by Sir Alfred Denning. Stevens. 122 pp. 10s.
Marx and Engels on Malthus. Introduction by R. L. Meek. Lawrence & Wishart. 190 pp. 15s.
Scottish Chartism, by Leslie C. Wright. Oliver & Boyd. 242 pp. 21s.
Viet-Nam Fights for Freedom, by J. Starobin. Lawrence & Wishart. 62 pp. 2s. 6d.
The Vocabulary of Politics, by T. D. Weldon. Penguin Books. 200 pp. 2s.
Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete, by Bedrich Hrozny. Orbis, Prague; Collet's, London. 260 pp. 32s.
In the Image of Mao Tse-tung, by K. A. Abbas. People's Publishing House, Bombay. 106 pp. Rs. 2/4.
J. V. Stalin: Collected Works, Vol. II. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; Lawrence & Wishart, London. 440 pp. 5s.
The Game of Death, by Albert E. Kahn. Cameron & Kahn, New York. 256 pp. $3.00.
The Truman Era, by I. F. Stone. Turnstile Press. 226 pp. 12s. 6d.
Crown Jewel, by Ralph de Boissiere. Australasian Book Society. 432 pp. 18s. 6d.
This Monstrous War, by Wilfred G. Burchett. Joseph Waters. 338 pp. 7s. 6d.
The Cloak and Dollar War, by Gordon Stewart. Lawrence & Wishart. 72 pp. 3s. 6d.
The Water Tower, by Andre Stil. Lawrence & Wishart. 240 pp. 10s. 6d.
The Children of the World Call to Us. Secretariat of the International Conference in Defence of Children. 212 pp. 2s.

PAMPHLETS

The Formulation of the Conception of Aggression, by Mitchell Franklin, 30 pp.; Petition of Ethel Rosenberg, 24 pp.; International Association of Democratic Lawyers.
Inside South Korea, by J. Jenkins. Union of Democratic Control. 16 pp. 1s.
Who Is Behind Them?: The Economic League. Labour Research Department. 16 pp. 4d.
The Darkening Shadow over Africa by Basil Davidson. U.D.C. 12 pp. 4d.
Advance to Peace. Ex-Service Movement for Peace. 8 pp. 3d.
In Poland Today. British T.U. Delegation. British-Polish Friendship Society. 60 pp. 9d.
Science, Humanity and Peace. Foreword by R. L. M. Synge, F.R.S. Science for Peace. 16 pp. 6d.

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Let the people own and control the land and all that comes from it. Where is the moral error in removing the present parasites who have gained illicit wealth from land granted by some rascally monarch in the past who had no scruples about "nationalising" it for the benefit of the few? Let the feudal and capitalist system be swept away, and then we can emerge as a nation unfettered by the financial bonds of a foreign state, and hold our own, not only in the counsels but the markets of the world. England could be a power once more, but with this difference that a contented people could enjoy the fruits of their labours; that backward areas would feel the benevolence rather than the brutality of this country; that other nations would realise our peaceful intentions, instead of regarding us as merely an armed outpost of a large military bloc.' I will end this section with a comment from a Northumbrian reader: 'Imagine what could happen if the whole of the British labour and trade union movement, regardless of different viewpoints, were united on one progressive policy! That would soon put paid to the Tories. And in my opinion, the sooner we get more readers for *L.M.* the sooner this will come about.'

THE ARCHBISHOP'S WARNING

To what is said about British Guiana in this issue I would like to add two short quotations. Firstly, the Elizabethan Adventurer, Laurence Keymis, one of Raleigh's captains, in 1596 from Guiana addressed himself to the 'Captaine of Her Majesties Guard', in these words: 'The riches of this place are not fit for any private estate.' Secondly, the First Minister of the present Queen Elizabeth might well heed a general warning to Empire-builders. Its date is 1913, when Mr. Churchill was still flushed with victories *at home*, having sent troops to overawe Tonypandy miners and gunboats to threaten Liverpool dockers. 'Let it once have been shown that Europe could acquiesce, even with a shrug of horror, in a system of admitted wrong-doing to native peoples, for whom our European nations, with England not least, had responsibility, confidence would have surely been shattered in European Government and European leadership and European promises.' The speaker? The then Archbishop of Canterbury, referring to the atrocities against Congo rubber workers. Will the present Primate repeat his predecessor's warning about the treatment today of tribesmen in Kenya or sugar workers of British Guiana? Members of the Church of England might ask him?

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